

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. LL652: N/A

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SUBJECT: LONDON TIMES INTERVIEW WITH JORDANIAN PRIME
MINISTER RIFAI

1. RIFAI GAVE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW TO LONDON TIMES
CARRIED APRIL L4. IN ADDITION TO QUOTING RIFAI THAT
HAWK DEAL WITH US CANCELLED (SEPTTEL). INTERVIEW STORY
RAN AS FOLLOWS:

2. BEGIN TEXT: "ON LEBANON, MR. RIFAI SAID: 'OUR
POSITION IS VERY CLEAR AND IT IS IDENTICAL TO THE SYRIAN
POSITION. WE BELIEVE THAT WHAT IS HAPPENING IN LEBANON
IS AN ATTEMPT BY LEFTIST EXTREMIST FORCES IN THE COUNTRY,
NOT ONLY TO CHANGE THE PERSON OF THE PRESIDENT OR THE
PRIME MINISTER, BUT TO CHANGE THE WHOLE POLITICAL STRUC-
TURE IN THE COUNTRY.'

THE ARMY HAD DISINTEGRATED, THE SECURITY FORCES WERE
NON-EXISTENT AND THE ONLY WAY ORDER COULD BE RESTORED
WOULD BE BY THE PRESENCE OF SYRIAN FORCES WHICH COULD
SEPARATE THE WARRING FACTIONS.

MR. RIFAI SAID THE AMERICANS ACCEPTED THE JORDANIAN
ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM, BUT 'WE COULD NOT GET THEM TO
ACCEPT, AT LEAST AT THE PRESENT TIME, THE IDEA OF DIRECT
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SYRIAN INTERVENTION. THEY CLAIMED THEY WERE NOT SURE OF

THE ISRAELI REACTION'.

HE THOUGHT A SYRIAN INTERVENTION DESIRABLE AND NECESSARY, EVEN IF A NEW LEBANESE PRESIDENT WERE ELECTED. 'WHAT IS THE NEW PRESIDENT GOING TO DO, WITH NO ARMY AND NO POLICE?'

ON THE GENERAL MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, MR. RIFAI SAID KING HUSAIN HAD URGED THE AMERICANS TO TAKE A NEW INITIATIVE 'TO REGAIN THE MOMENTUM LOST IN THE SEARCH FOR PEACE. WE BELIEVE THAT AS A RESULT OF THE SECOND SINAI AGREEMENT DEADLOCK HAS DEVELOPED AND MOVEMENT ON OTHER FRONTS HAS BECOME IMPOSSIBLE ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS.'

THE KING HAD URGED HIS HOSTS TO RESUME THEIR EFFORTS NOT ON A STEP-BY-STEP BASIS BUT 'ON THE BASIS OF ONE BIG LEAP TO SETTLE THE PROBLEM ONCE AND FOR ALL.' THIS WOULD INVOLVE TOTAL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM ALL ARAB TERRITORIES OCCUPIED IN 1967, RECOGNITION OF THE NATIONAL RIGHTS OF THE PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, AND GUARANTEES OF SECURITY FOR ALL STATES IN THE AREA.

'WE GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT THE AMERICANS WERE VERY ANXIOUS TO REGAIN THE MOMENTUM TOWARDS PEACE, BUT THAT IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT FOR THEM TO DECIDE ON ANY SPECIFIC COURSE OF ACTION AT THIS PARTICULAR TIME BECAUSE OF LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS--THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE AN ELECTION AT THE END OF THIS YEAR. I GOT THE IMPRESSION THAT PERHAPS NOTHING WILL HAPPEN DURING 1976.'

MR. RIFAI SAID THAT HE AND THE KING WOULD BE TALKING TO MR. CALLAGHAN ABOUT THE ROLE OF BRITAIN AND OF EUROPE IN TRYING TO REGAIN THE MOMENTUM TOWARDS PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. UNLESS THE MOMENTUM WAS REGAINED, HE SAID, 'WE SHALL FIND THE WHOLE AREA DETERIORATING ON THE PATH OF WAR. THIS IS PERHAPS THE LAST OPPORTUNITY OF ACHIEVING PEACE.' END TEXT ARMSTRONG

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